

DANIEL F. WATERS GERMANTOWN DYE WORKS,  
BUILDING K  
37-55 East Wister Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-213-K

HAER  
PA  
51-PHILA,  
716K-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HAER  
PA  
51-PHILA,  
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## HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

DANIEL F. WATERS GERMANTOWN DYE WORKS, BUILDING K

HAER No. PA-213-K

Location:

37-55 E. Wister Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

Present Owner:

Greater Germantown Housing Development Corporation  
48 East Penn Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Present Occupant:

Vacant.

Significance:

This 1866 building was William Mills' original dye house.

## **PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

### **A. Physical History**

#### **Date(s) of Erection:**

Building K consists of an original 1866 section (Hexamer 1875) and a circa 1907 addition.

#### **Architect:**

Unknown.

#### **Original/Subsequent Owners:**

See Chain of Title.

#### **Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:**

Unknown.

#### **Original Plans/Construction:**

Building K was William Mills' original dye house. Built in 1866, it was obsolete as a dye house by 1875, when Building C was built. On the 1875 Hexamer Survey, Building K is listed as the "Old Dye House (not at present used)". At that time, it was a 2-story (one floor) stone structure, with a shingle roof, measuring 22.5' x 35' and a ventilator on the roof. The 1878 Hexamer Survey lists the structure as the "Grey House".

#### **Alterations/Additions:**

Building K had an upper floor addition applied in 1907, with Daniel F. Waters' expansion of the dye works. This upper floor is actually an open warehouse that includes the top floor of Building J and parts of Building I.

### **B. Historical Context**

As the first dye house at the Germantown Dye Works, the original section of Building K predates most of the present dye works complex. With the growth and success of William Mills' operation, Building C was built in 1875 to serve as the dye house. Building K was altered and added to in 1907, as part of Daniel F. Waters' expansion campaign.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

#### Architectural Character:

Building K is a vernacular mid-nineteenth century industrial building modernized in 1907.

#### Condition of Fabric:

Poor condition; particularly the first floor, where water penetration is exposing the underlying rubble schist.

### B. Description of Exterior

#### Overall Dimensions:

Originally, Building K measured 22.5' x 35'. With the 1907 addition, a top floor of similar dimensions was added, as well as a 9' x 32' section north of the original section. The building is three storeys.

#### Foundations:

Rubble stone.

#### Walls:

First floor is of stucco-over-rubble stone and, according to the 1875 Hexamer Survey, the walls were 18' thick. Upper floor is of brick.

#### Structural System/Framing:

Load bearing brick masonry walls with internal wood framing.

#### Porches/Stoops/Balconies/Bulkheads:

Exterior metal stairway leads to second floor doorway entrance.

#### Chimneys:

Not applicable.

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

There are three doorways on Building K's west elevation: two on the first floor and one on the second floor, accessible from the metal stairway. All three doorways have simple wooden surrounds with vertical plank doors.

Windows/Shutters:

Building K has two windows, both on the upper floor: a twelve-pane, aluminum industrial sash and a smaller window infilled with glass block. The larger window has an infilled segmental arch lintel. It is also evident from the masonry that a window on the upper floor of the west elevation has been infilled.

Roof:

Built-up asphalt roofing. The roof-wall junction is capped with terra-cotta tiles. According to the 1875 Hexamer Survey, original section had a wood-boxed cornice.

C. Description of Interior

Floor Plans:

All three floors have open floor plans. Third floor opens into the open floor of Building J.

Stairways:

There is a wooden stairway connecting the second and third floors on the west wall.

Flooring

2" wooden planking throughout.

Wall/Ceiling Finishes:

Rough plaster finishes over rubble walls on lower floors. Exposed, painted brick on upper floor.

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

No historic interior door remain.

Windows:

Modern sash.

Decorative Features and Trim:

None.

Hardware:

Exterior second floor doorway has original lock and hinges.

Mechanical Equipment:

Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:

Early section originally heated by 1" wrought iron steam pipes resting on iron.

Lighting:

Early section originally lit by gas.

Plumbing:

Not available.

**D. Site**

General Setting/Orientation:

Building K is bordered by Building L to its north, Building N to its west, Building I to its south, and the cartway to its west.

Historic Landscape Design:

None.

Outbuildings:

None.